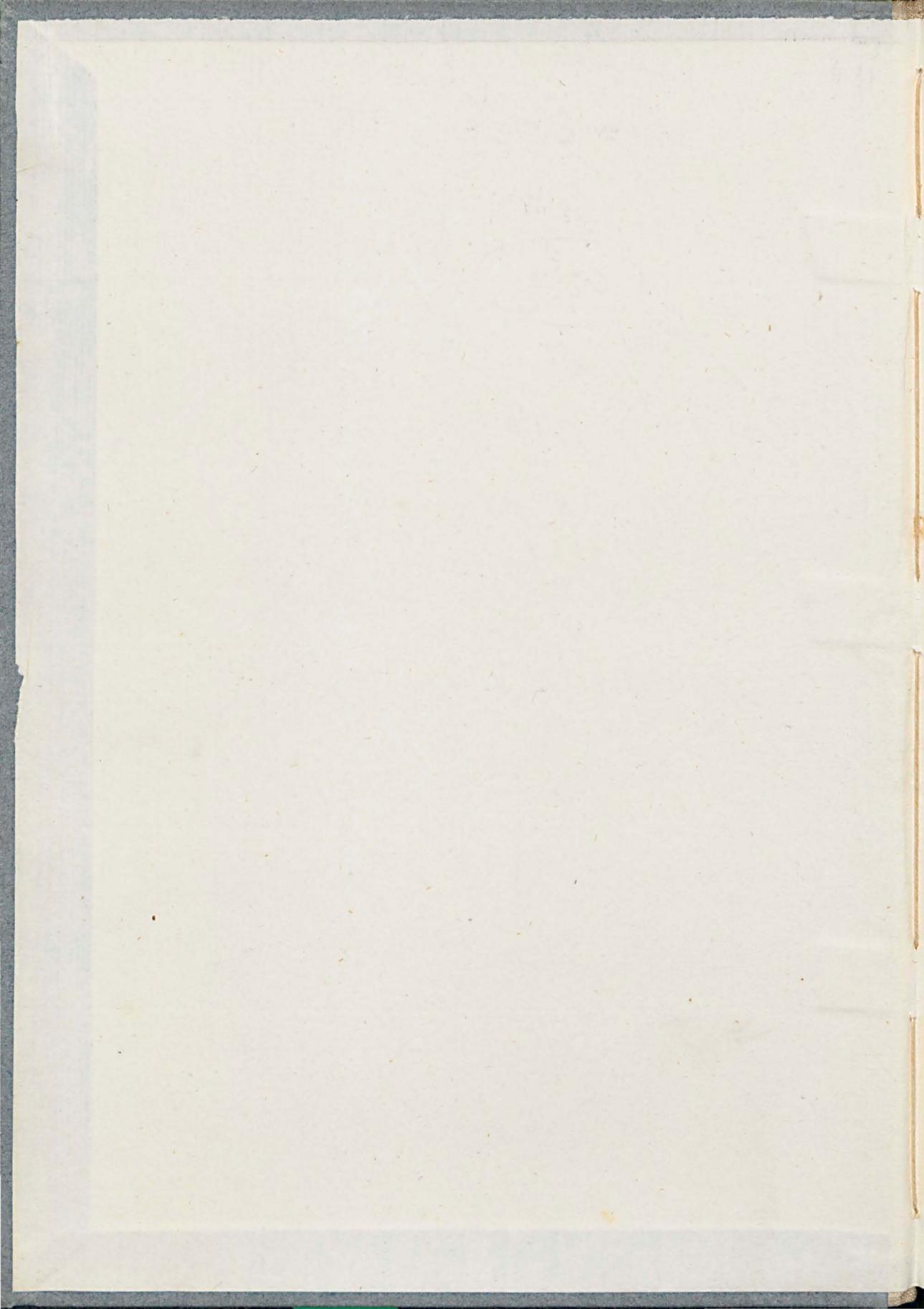


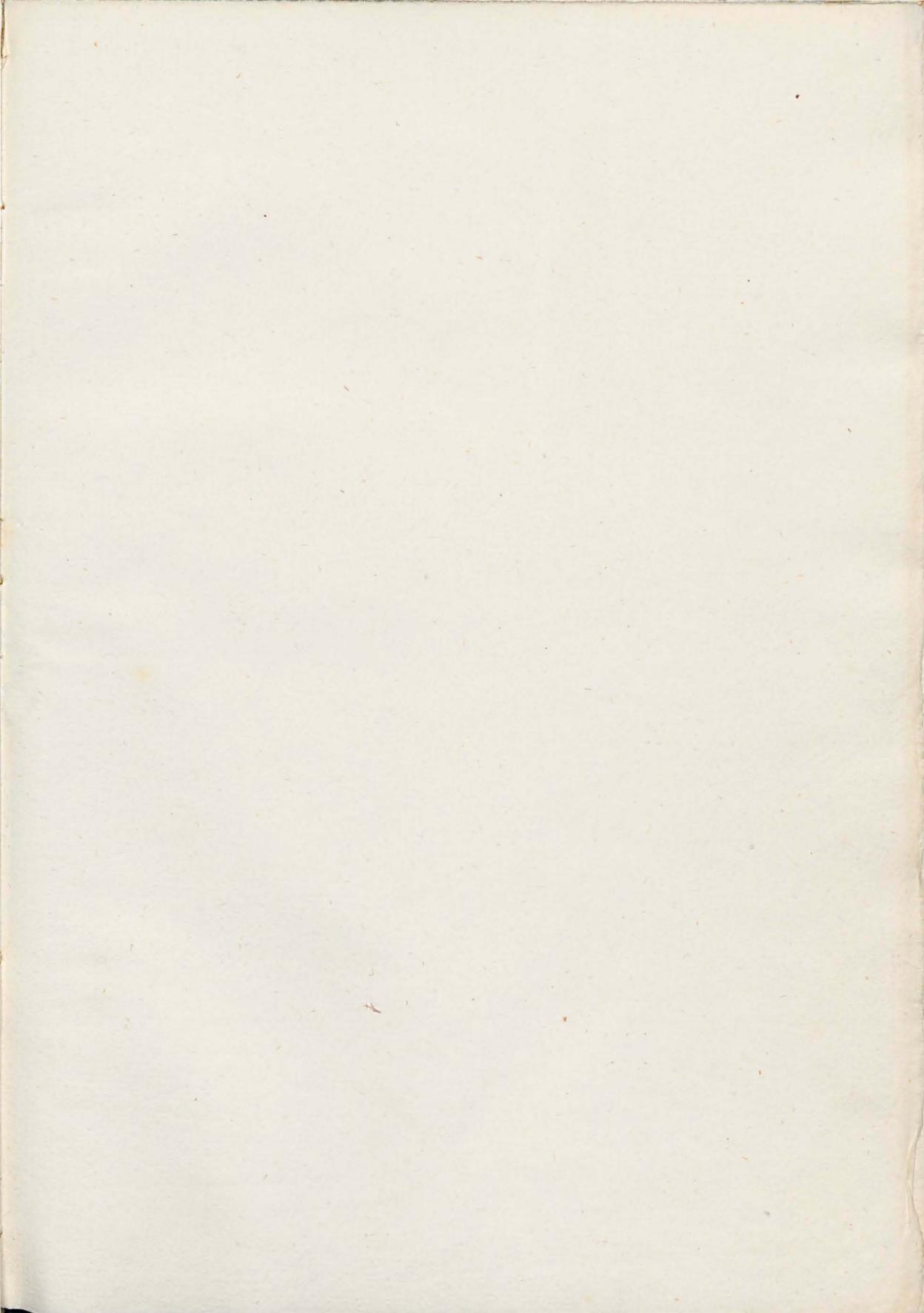
THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE, &
THE BOKE OF CAPIDE, GOD OF
LOVE, OR THE CACKOW AND THE
NIGHTINGALE

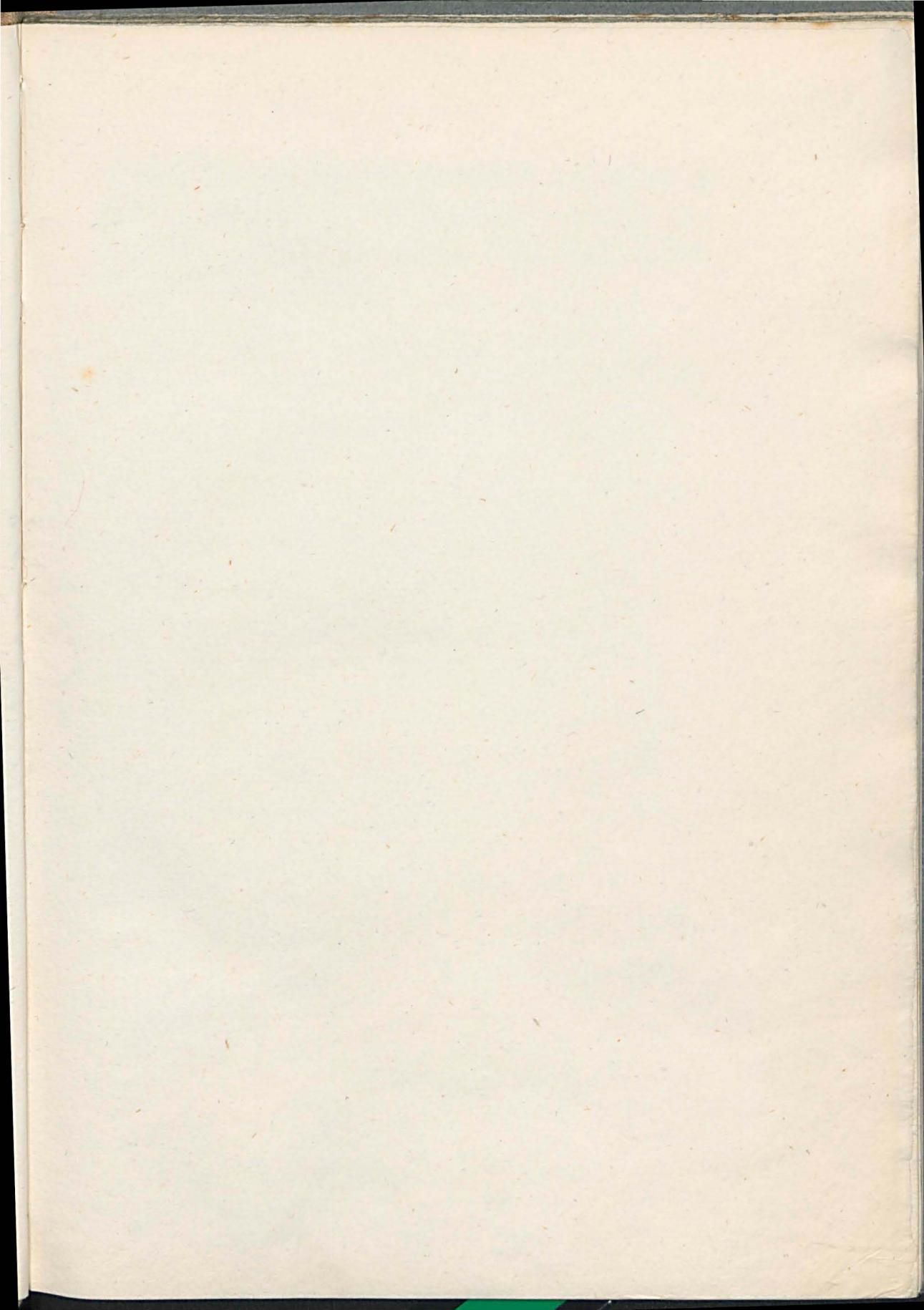


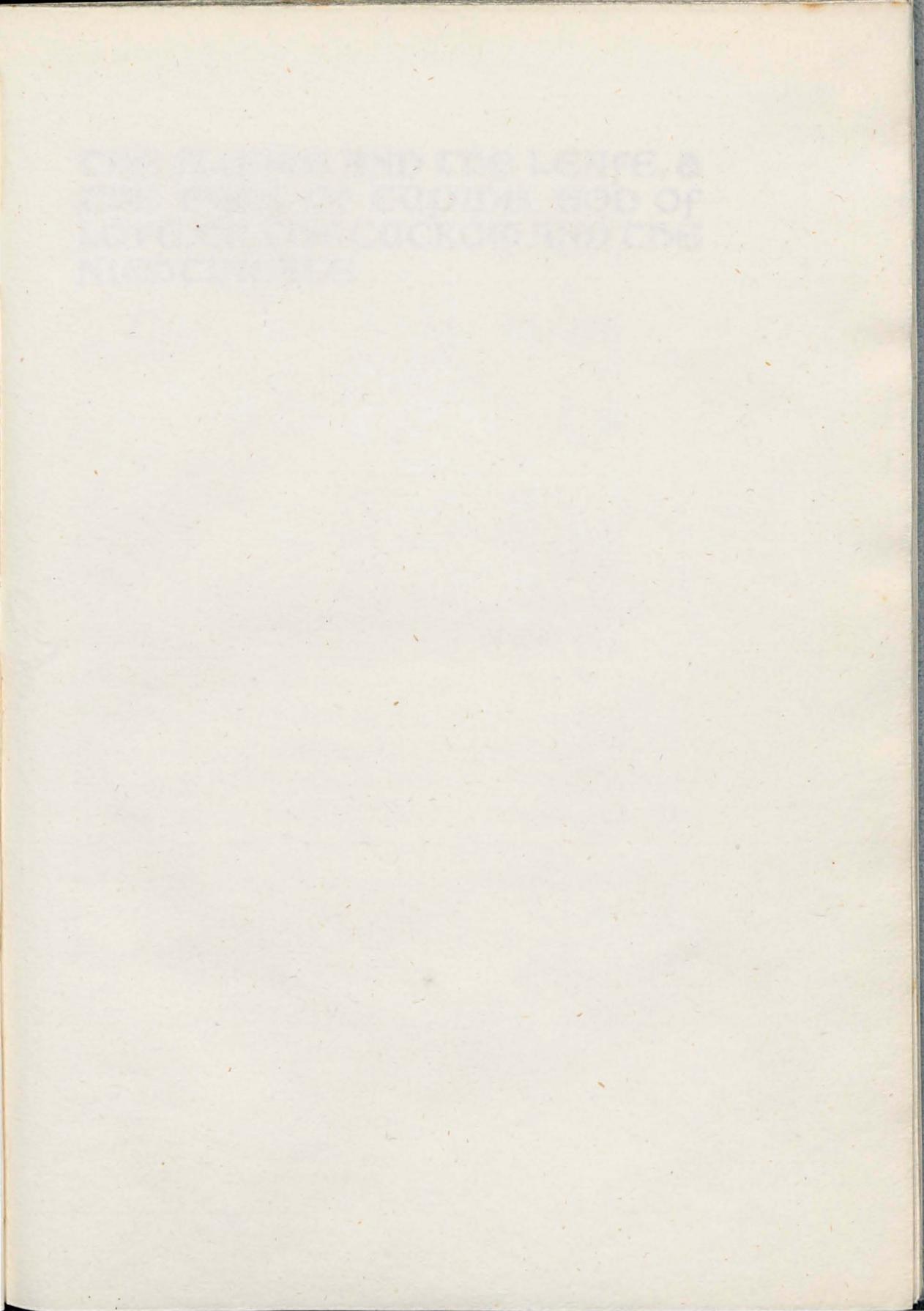
To Mr & Mrs T. M. Brooke.

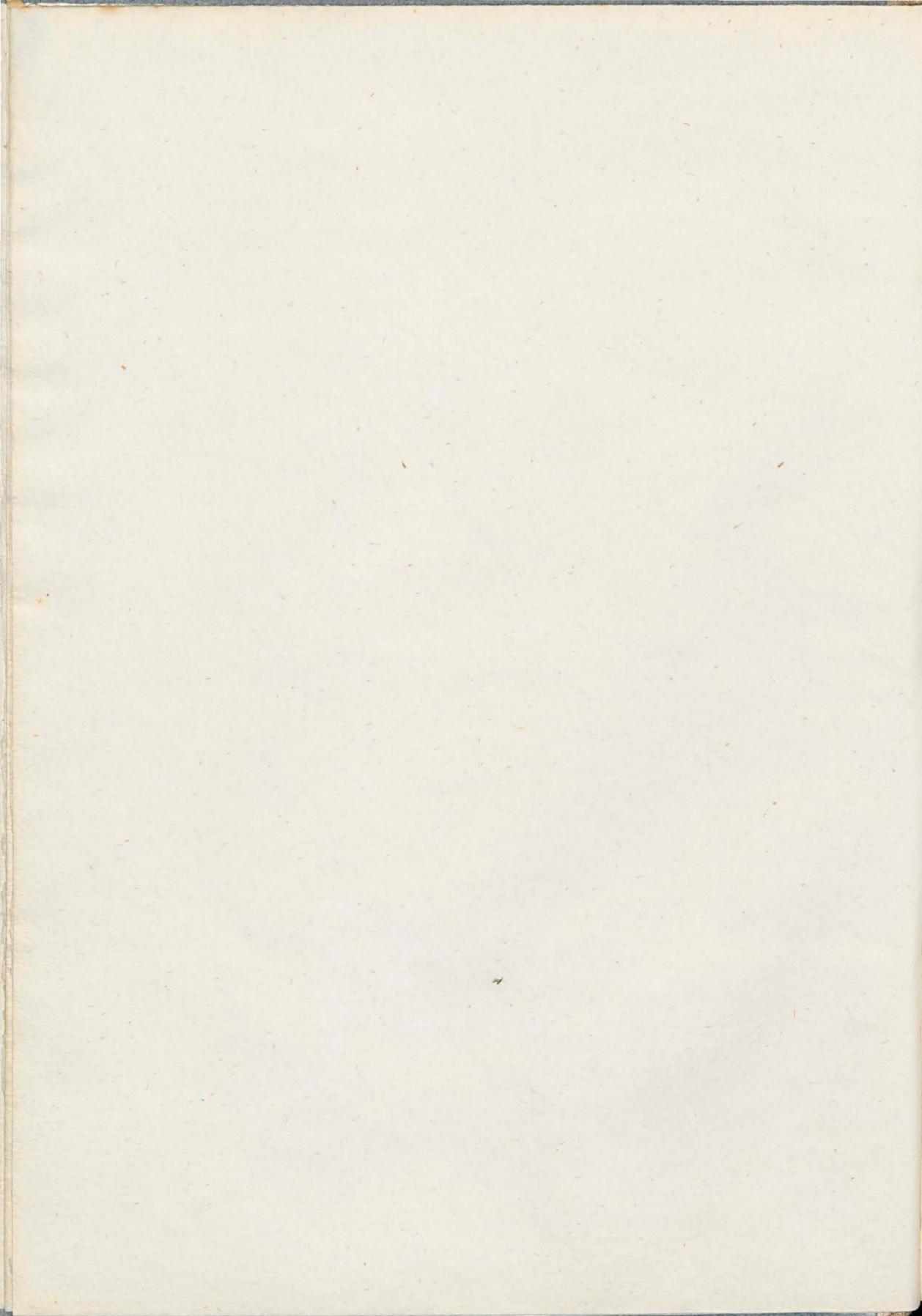
from S.C.C

Christmas 1896.









THE FLOURE AND THE LEAFE, &
THE BOKE OF CAPIDE, GOD OF
LOVE, OR THE CUCKOW AND THE
NIGHTINGALE

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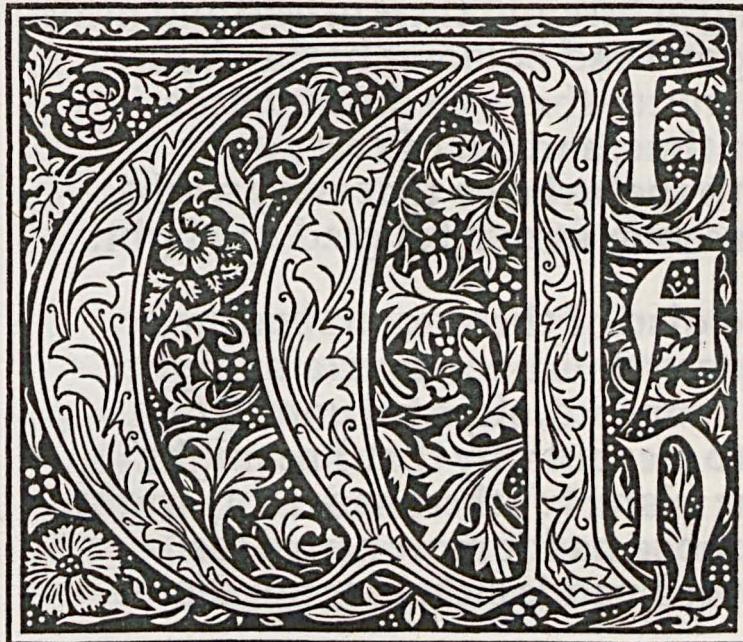
1898

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THE WORKS OF CHARLES
LOVE, OR THE CACKHOWNS AND THE
MENAGERIE

The floure and the Leafē



THAT Phebus his chaire of gold so hie
Hadde whirled up the sterrie sky alofte,
And in the Boole was entred certainly:
Whan showres swete of raine discended softe,
Causing the ground, so fele times and ofte,
Up for to given many an holsome aire,
And every plaine was eke yclothed faire

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With newe grene, and maketh smalle floures
To springen here and there in field and mede;
So very good and holsome be the shoures,
That it renueth that was old and dede
In winter time; and out of every sede
Springeth the herbe, so that every wight
Of this sesoun wexeth ful glad and light.

And I, so glad of the sesoun thus swete,
Was happed thus upon a certaine night:
As I lay in my bed, slepe ful unmete
Was unto me; but why that I ne might
Rest, I ne wiste; for there nas ertly wight,
As I suppose, hadde more hertes ese
Than I, for I nadde sicknesse nor disease.

Wherfore I mervaile gretly of my selfe,
That I withouten slepe so longe lay;
And up I rose three houres after twelfe,
Aboute the firste springing of the day;
And on I putte my geare and mine array,
And to a plesaunt grove I gan to passe,
Long or the brighte sonne uprisen was;

In which were okes grete, streight as a line,
Under the which the grasse, so fresh of hewe,
Was newly sprong; and an eight foot or nine
Every tree wel fro his fellow grew,
With branches brode, lade with leves newe,
That spongen out ayen the sonne shene,
Some very rede, and some a glad light grene;

Which, as me thoghte, was right a plesant sight;
And eke the briddes songes for to here
Would have rejoiced any earthly wight;
And I that couthe not yet, in no manere,
Heren the nightingale of al the yere,
ful busily herkened with herte and ere,
If I her voice perceive coude any where.

And, at the last, a path of litel brede
I found, that gretly hadde not used be;
for it forgrown was with grasse and wede,
That wel unneth a wight ne might it se:
Thoghte I, This path some whider goth, pardel!
And so I followede, til it me broght
To right a plesaunt herber, well ywroght,

That benched was, and eke with turfes newe
freshly turved, whereof the grene gras,
So smal, so thikke, so short, so fresh of hewe,
That most ylike grene wol, I wot, it was:
The hegge also that yede in this compas,
And closede in alle the grene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere,

Wrethen in fere so wel and conningly,
That every braunch and lefe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of oon height by and by.
I ne segh never thing, I you ensure,
So wel ydone; for he that toke the cure
It for to make, I trow did al his peine
To make it passe alle tho that men have seine.

And shapen was this herber, roofe and al,
As is a prety parlour; and also
The hegge as thikke as is a castle wal,
That who that list withoute to stond or go,
Though he would al day prien to and fro,
He shoulde not see if there were any wight
Within or no; but one within wel might

Perceive alle tho that yeden there withoute
Into the field, that was on every side
Covered with corne and grasse; that out of doubte,
Thogh one wolde seken al the worlde wide,
So rich a fielde ne coude not be espide
On any coast, as of the quantitie;
for of alle goode thing there was plentie.

And I that al this plesaunt sight ay sie
Thoghte sodainly I felte so swete an aire
Com of the eglentere, that certainly
There is no herte, I deme, in such dispaire,
Ne with no thoughtes froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it sholde sone have bote,
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stode and cast aside mine eie,
I was of ware the fairest medler tree,
That ever yet in al my life I sie,
As ful of blosmes as it myghte be;
Therein a goldfinch leping pretilye
fro bough to bough; and, as him list, gan ete
Of buddes here and there and floures swete.

And to the herber side ther was joyninge
This faire tree, of which I have you told;
And at the last the brid began to singe,
Whan he had eten what he ete wold,
So passing swetly, that by manifold
It was more plesaunt than I coude devise.
And whan his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so mery a note
Answered him, that al the wode rong
So sodainly, that, as it were a sote,
I stood astonied; so was I with the song
Thorow ravished, that til late and long,
Ne wist I in what place I was, ne where;
And ay, me thoghte, she song even by mine ere.

Wherefore about I waited busily,
On every side, if that I her myghte see;
And, at the last, I gan ful wel aspie
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side, even right by me,
That gave so passing a delicious smel,
According to the eglentere ful wel.

Wherof I hadde so inly great plaisir,
That, as me thoghte, I surely ravished was
Into Paradice, where as my desire
Was for to be, and no ferther to pass,
As for that day; and on the sote grass,
I sat me downe; for, as for mine entent,
The briddes song was more convenient,

And more plesaunt to me by many fold,
Than mete or drinke, or any other thing.
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholsome savours eke so comforting,
That as I demede, sith the beginning
Of thilke world was never sene or than
So plesaunt a ground of none erthely man.

And as I sat, the briddes herkening thus,
Me thoghte that I herde voices sodainly,
The most swetest and most delicious
That ever any wight, I trow truly,
Herde in his life; for soth the armony
And swete accord was in so good musike,
That the voices to angels most was like.

And at the last, out of a grove faste by,
That was right goodly and plesaunt to sight,
I sie where there cam, singing lustily,
A world of ladies; but, to tel aright
Here grete beautie, it lieth not in my might,
Ne here array; neverthelesse I shal
Telle you a part, though I speke not of al.

The surcotes white, of velvet wele sitting,
They were in clad, and the semes echone,
As it were in a maner garnishing,
Was set with emeraudes, one and one.
But by and by ful many a riche stone
Was set on the purfiles, out of doute,
Of colors, sleves, and traines round aboute.

As grete perles, round and oriente,
Diamondes fine, and rubies rede
And many another stone, of which I wente
The names now; and everich on hir hede
A riche fret of gold, which, withoute drede,
Was ful of stately riche stones set;
And every lady had a chapelet

Upon hir hede of floures fresh and grene,
So wele ywroght and so mervellously,
That sothe it was a noble sight to sene;
Some of laurer, and some ful plesauntly
Hadde chapelets of woodbind, and sadly
Some of agnus castus were also
Chapelets freshe; but there were many tho

That song and daunced, eke ful soberly,
And al they yede in maner of compace;
But oon there yede in mid the company,
Soole by hir selfe; but alle followede the grace
Which that she kepte, whose heavenly faire face
So plesaunt was, and hir wele shap persone,
That of beautie she past hem everichone.

And more richly besene, by manifold,
She was also in every maner thing:
Upon hir hede, ful plesaunt to beholde,
A crowne of gold, riche for any king:
A braunch of agnus castus eke bering
In hir hand; and to my sight truly,
She lady was of al the company.

And she began a roundel lustely,
That Suse le foyle, devers moy, men calle,
Seant, mon joly cuer est endormy;
And than the company answered alle,
With voices swete entuned, and so smalle
That it me thoghte the swetest melody
That ever I herde in al my life soothly.

And thus they came, dauncing and singing
Into the middest of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sitting;
And, God wot, me thoghte I was wel bigone;
for than I might avise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coude best daunce or singe,
Or who most womanly was in alle thinge.

They hadde not daunced but a litel throwe,
Whan that I herde not ferre off sodainely,
So grete a noise of thondering trompes blowe,
As though it should have departed the skie;
And, aftir that, within a while I sie,
from the same grove where the ladyes come oute,
Of men of armes coming such a route,

As alle the men on earth hadde ben assembled
In that place, wel horsed for the nones,
Stering so faste, that al the erthe trembled:
But for to speke of riches and of stones,
And men and horse, I trowe the large wones
Of Prestir John, ne al his tresorie,
Mighte not unneth have boght the tenth partie

Of here array: whoso list heren more,
I shal reherse so as I can a lite.
Out of the grove, that I of spake before
I sie com first, al in here clokes white,
A company, that ware, for here delite,
Chapelets fresh of okes serialle,
Newly yspronge, and trompets they were alle.

On every trompe hanging a brode banere
Of fine tartarium ful richely bete;
Every trumpet his lordes armes bere;
About here neckes, with grete perles sete,
Coleres brode; for cost they wolde not lete,
As it wolde seme, for here scochones echone
Were set aboute with many a precious stone.

Here horse harneis was al white also.
And after hem next, in one company,
Camen kinges of armes, and no mo,
In clokes of white cloth of gold richly;
Chapelets of grene upon here hedes on hie;
The crownes that they on here scochones bere,
Were set with perle, ruby, and saphere,

And eke grete diamondes, many one:
But al here horse harneis and otherere gere
Was in a sute accordinge everichone,
As ye have herde the foresaid trompets were;
And, by seming, they were no thing to lere,
And here guiding they dide so manerly.
And, after hem, came a grete company

Of heraudes and pursevauntes eke,
Arrayed in clothes of whit velvette,
And, hardily, they were no thing to seke,
How they on hem sholden the harneis sette;
And everiche man had on a chapelette;
Scochones and eke horse harneis, indeede,
They had in sute of hem that fore hem yede.

Next after hem camen, in armour bright
Hl save here hedes, semely knightes nine;
And every claspe and naile, as to my sight,
Of here harneis were of rede golde fine;
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappores of here stedes stronge,
Wide and large, that to the ground dide honge.

And everiche bosse of bridel and paitrel
That hadde they, was worth, as I wolde wene,
A thousand pound; and on here hedes, wel
Dressed, were crounes of fresh laurer grene,
The best ymade that ever I hadde sene;
And everiche knight had after him riding
Three henshemen on him ay awaiting.

Of which every first, on a short tronchoun,
His lordes helme bare, so richly dight,
That even the worst was worthy the ransoun
Of any king; the second a shield bright
Bare at his backe; the thridde bare upright
A mightie spere, ful sharpe yground and kene,
And every child eke ware of leves grene

A fresh chapelet upon his heres brighte;
And clokes white of fine velvet they were;
Here stedes trapped and arraied righte,
Withoute difference, as here lordes were;
And after hem, on many a fresh corsere,
There came of armede knightes swich a route,
That they bespradde the large field aboute.

And alle they ware, after here degrees,
Chapelets newe made of laurer grene;
Some of the oke, and some of other trees,
Some in here hondes bare boughes shene,
Some of laurer, and some of okes kene,
Some of hauthorne, and some of the woodbind,
And many mo which I hadde not in mind.

And so they came, here horses freshly stering
With blodie sownes of her trompes loude;
There sie I many an uncouth disguising
In the array of thise knightes proude;
And at the last, as evenly as they coude,
They toke here place in middes of the mede,
And every knight turned his horse hede

To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
In the arrest; and so justes bigan
On everiche part abouten, here and there;
Some brake his spere, some drew down hors & manne;
Aboute the field astray the stedes ranne;
And, to behold here rule and governaunce,
I you ensure, it was a grete plesaunce.

And so the justes last an houre and more;
But tho that crouned were in laurer grene
Wanne the prise; here dintes were so sore,
That there was none ayenst hem myghte sustene:
And the justing al was yleft off clene,
And fro here horse the ninth alight anone,
And so did al the remenaunt everichone.

And forth they yede togider, twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight,
Toward the ladyes on the grene plaine,
That song and daunced, as I saide now righte:
Th eladyes tho, sone as they goodly myghte,
They braken off bothe the song and daunce,
And yede to mete hem with ful glad semblaunce.

And everiche lady toke, ful womanly
By the right hond a knight, and forth they yede
Unto a faire laurer that stode fast by,
With leves lade, the boughes of grete brede;
And to my dome there never was, indeede,
Man that hadde sene halfe so faire a tree;
for undirnethe there might it wel have be

An hundred persons, at here owne plesaunce,
Shadowed fro the hete of Phebus bright,
So that they sholden have felt no grevaunce
Of raine ne haile that hem ne hurte might.
The savour eke rejoice wold any wight,
That hadde be sicke or melancolius,
It was so very good and vertuous.

And with grete reverence encline they lowe
To thilke tree so sote, and faire of hewe;
And aftir that, within a litel throwe,
They al beganne to singe and daunce of newe
Some song of love, some plaining of untrewe,
Envirouninge the tree that stood upright;
And ever yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last mine eye I caste aside,
And was ware of a lustie company
That came roming out of the felde wide
Hond in hond a knight and a lady;
The ladies al in surcotes that richely
Purfiled were with many a riche stone,
And everiche knight of grene ware mantles on,

Enbrouded wel so as the surcotes were:
And everich had a chapelet on hir hede,
Which dide right wel upon the shining here,
Ymade of goodly floures white and rede;
The knightes eke, that they in hond gan lede,
In sute of hem ware chapelets everichone,
And bifore hem wente minstrels many one,

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and sautry,
Al in grene; and on here hedes bare,
Of divers floures, made ful craftely,
Al in a sute, goodly chapelets they ware;
And so dauncing, into the mede they fare.
In mid the which they fonde a tuft that was
Al oversprad with floures in compas.

Whereto they al enclined everychone
With gret reverence, and that ful humblely;
And, at the laste, there bigan anone
A lady for to singe right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie;
for, as me thoght, among hir notes swete,
She said: Si douse est la Margarete.

And than they al answered hir in fere
So passingly wel and so plesauntly,
That soth it was a blisful noise to here;
But I not how, it happedede sodainly
As aboute none, the sonne so fervently
Wexe hote, that the pretie tendre floures
Hadde lost the beautie of here freshe coloures,

forshronke with hete; the ladyes eke to brent,
That they ne wiste where hem to bestowe;
The knightes swelte, for lakke of shade nie shent;
And aftir that, within a litel throwe,
The wind bigan so sturdily to blowe,
That down goth alle the floures everichone,
So that, in al the mede, there laft not one;

Save such as socoured were among the leves
fro everich storm that mighten hem assaile,
Growing undir hegges and thikke greves;
And aftir that there came a storme of haile
And raine in fere, so that, withouten faile,
The ladyes ne the knightes nadde o threde
Drie upon hem, so dropping was here wede.

And whan the storm was clene passed away,
Tho clad in white that stode undir the tree,
They felte no thing of the grete affray,
That they in grene without had in ybe;
To hem they yede for routhe and pite,
Hem to comfort aftir here grete disese,
So faine they were the helplesse for to ese.

Than was I ware how oon of hem in grene
Had on a croune, ful rich and wel sitting;
Wherfore I demed wel she was a quene,
And tho in grene on hir were awaiting;
The ladyes than in white that were comming
Towardes hem, and the knightes in fere,
Biganne hem to comfort, and make hem chere.

The quene in white, that was of grete beautie,
Toke by the hond the quene that was in grene,
And said: Suster, I have right grete pitie
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,
Wherin ye and your companie have bene
So long, alas! and if that it yow plese
To go with me, I shal do yow the ese

In al the pleasure that I can or may;
Whereof the tother, humbly as she mighte,
Thonked hir moche; for in right il array
She was with storm and hete, I yow behighte;
And everiche lady, than anone ful righte,
That were in white, oon of hem toke in grene
By the hond; which whan the knightes hadde sene,

In lyk wise ech of hem toke hir a knight
Yclad in grene, and forth with hem they fare
Unto an hegge, where they anon gan right
To make here justes: wolde they not spare
Boughes to hewe doun, and eke trees square,
Wherewith they made hem stately fires grete,
To drie here clothes that were wringing wete.

And aftir that, of herbes that ther grewe,
They made, for blisters of the sonne brenning,
Very good and holsome ointments newe,
Where that they yede the syke fast anointing;
And aftir that they yede aboute gadering
Plesaunt salades, which they made hem ete,
For to refresh here grete unkindly hete.

The lady of the Lefe than gan to praye
Hir of the floure, for so to my seminge
They sholde be, as sene by here arraye,
To soupe with hir, and eke for any thinge,
That she sholde with hir al hir people bringe;
And she ayen, in right goodly manere,
Thanketh hir of hir most frendly chere,

Saying, plainly, that she wolde obaye
With al hir herte al hir commaundement;
And then anon, withoute lenger delaye,
The lady of the Lefe hath oon ysent
for a palfray, as aftir hir intent,
Arrayed wel and faire in harneis golde,
for no thing lacked, that to him long sholde.

And aftir that, to al hir company
She made to purvey horse and everich thing
That they neded; and than ful lustily,
Even by the herber wher I was sitting,
They passed al, so plesauntly singing,
That it wold have comforted any wight.
But than I sie a passing wonder sight;

for than the nightingale, that al the day
Had in the laurer sete, and dide hir might
The whole service to singe longing to May,
Al sodainly bigan to take hir flight;
And to the lady of the Lefe, forthright,
She flew, and set hir on hir hond softly,
Which was a thing I merveiled of gretely.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medler tree
Was fled for hete into the bushes colde,
Unto the lady of the floure gan flee,
And on hir hond he set him as he wolde,
And plesauntly his winges gan to folde;
And for to singe they pained hem both, as sore
As they hadde do of al the day bifore.

And so thise ladyes rode forth a grete pace,
And al the rout of knightes eke in fere;
And I that hadde sene al this wonder case,
Thoght I wolde assay in some manere,
To knowe fully the trouth of this matere;
And what they were that rode so plesauntly.
And whan they were the herber passed by,

I dreste me forth, and happede to mete anone
Right a faire lady, I you ensure;
And she come riding by hirself alone,
Hl in white; with semblaunce ful demure
I salued hir, and bad hir good aventure
Might hir bifal, as I coude most humbly;
And she answerede: My doughter, gramercy!

¶Madame, quod I, if that I dorst enquere
Of yow, I wolde faine, of that company,
Wite what they be that paste by this arbere?
¶And she ayen answerede right frendely:
My faire doughter, al tho that passed here by
In whyt clothing, be servaunts everichone
Unto the Lefe, and I myselfe am one.

See ye not her that crouned is, quod she,
H^ol in whyt?  Madame, quod I, yis:
 That is Diane, goddesse of Chastite;
And for bicause that she a maiden is,
In hir own hond the braunch she beareth ywis,
That agnus castus men calle properly;
And alle the ladyes in hir company,

Which as ye se of that herbe chapelets were,
Be such as han kept alway hir maidenhede:
And alle they that of laurer chaplets bere,
Be such as hardy were, and manly indede,
Victorius name which never may be dede!
And alle they were so worthy of here honde,
That in here time none might hem withstonde.

And tho that were chaplets on here hede
Of fresh woodbind, be such as never were
To love untrew in word, in thoght, ne dede,
But aye stedfast; ne for plesaunce, ne fere,
Thogh that they shuld here hertes al totere,
Wolde ne flitte, but ever were stedfaste,
Til that here lives there asunder braste.

Now faire madame, quod I, yet wold I pray
Your ladiship, if that it mighthe be,
That I mighthe knowe, by some maner way,
Sith that it hath yliked your beaute,
The trouth of thise ladyes for to telle me;
What that thise knightes be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and were the flour?

And why that some dide reverence to the tre,
And some unto the plot of floures faire?
With right good will, my fair doghter, quod she,
Sith your desire is good and debonaire;
Tho nine crouned be very exemplaire
Of al honour longing to chivalry;
And those certaine be called the Nine Worthy,

Which ye may see now riding al bifore,
That in here time dide many a noble dede,
And for here worthiness ful oft have bore
The croune of laurer leves on here hede,
As ye may in your olde bokes rede;
And how that he that was a conquerour,
Hadde by laurer alway his most honour.

And tho that bere bowes in here honde
Of the precious laurer so notable,
Be such as were, I wol ye undirstonde,
Noble knightes of the rounde table,
And eke the Douseperis honourable,
Which they beren in signe of victory;
It is witnesse of here dedes mightily.

Eke there be knightes old of the garter,
That in here time dide right worthily;
And the honour they dide to the laurer,
Is, for by it they have here laud wholly,
Here triumph eke, and marshiall glory;
Which unto hem is more parfit richesse,
Than any wight imagine can or gesse.

for oon lefe given of that noble tree,
To any wight that hath don worthily,
And it be don so as it oghte to be,
Is more honour than any thing erthly;
Witnessse of Rome that founder was trewly
Of al knighthood and dedes marvelous;
Record I take of Titus Livius.

And as for hir that crouned is in grene,
It is flora, of thise floures goddesse;
And al that here on hir awaiting bene,
It are swich folk that loved ydelnesse
And not delite hadde of no besynesse
But for to hunt and hauke, and pley in medes,
And many othere suche ydel dedes;

And for the grete delite and plesaunce
They have to the floure, so reverently
They unto it do swich grete obeisaunce
As ye may se. Now faire Madame, quod I,
If I dorst aske what is the cause and why,
That knighthes have the signe of honour,
Wel rather by the Lefe than by the flour?

¶ Soothly, doughter, quod she, this is the trouth:
for knighthes ever sholde be persevering,
To seke honour without feintise or slouth,
fro wele to better in al maner thing;
In signe of which, with leves aye lasting
They be rewarded aftir here degré,
Whose lustie grene may not appairede be,

But aie keping here beautie freshe and grene;
for there nis storme that ne may hem deface,
Ne haile nor snow, ne winde nor frostes kene;
Wherfore they have this propertie and grace.
And for the floure, within a litel space
Woll be ylost; so simple of nature
They be, that they no grevaunce may endure;

And everich storme wil blow hem sone awaye,
Ne lasten they not but for oon sesoun;
That is the cause, the very trouth to saye,
That they maye not, by no way of resoun,
Be put to no swich occupacioun.

¶Madame, quod I, with al mine whole servise
I thanke you now, in my most humble wise;

for now I am acertained throughly,
Of everich thing I desired to knowe.

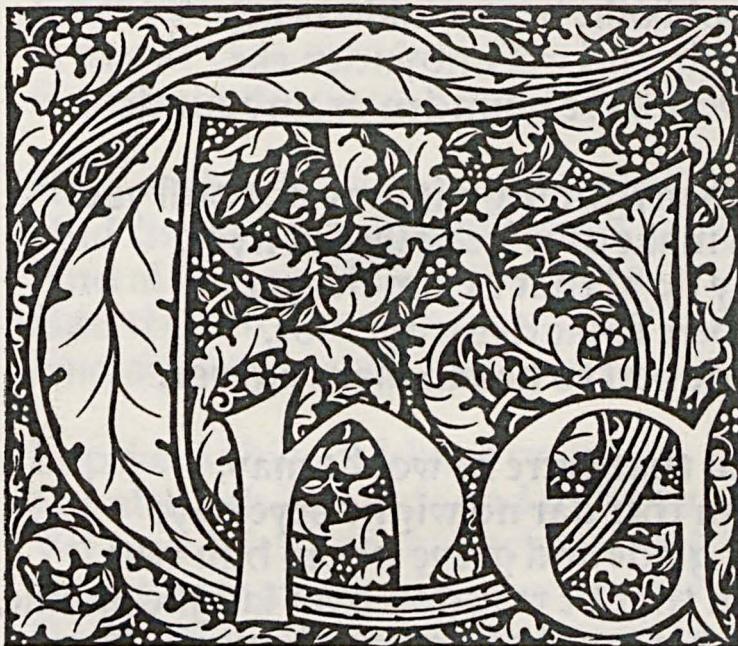
¶I am right glad that I have said, sothly,
Oght to your plesure, if ye wille me trowe,
Quod she ayen, But to whom do ye owe
Your service? and which wolle ye honoure,
Tel me I pray, this yere, the Lefe or floure?

¶ Madame, quod I, thogh I be least worthy,
Unto the Lefe I owe myn observaunce:
¶ That is, quod she, right wel don certeinly;
And pray I God to honour yow avaunce,
And kepe yow fro the wikked remembraunce
Of Malebouche, and al his cruelte,
And al that good and wel condiciouned be:

for here may I no lenger now abide,
I moste folowe the grete company,
That ye may see yondir bifore yow ride.
¶ And tho forth, as I couthe, most humbly
I toke my leve of hir, as she gan hie
Aftir hem, as faste as ever she mighthe;
And I drow homward, for it was nigh nighthe,

And put al that I hadde sene in writing,
Andir support of hem that lust it rede.
O litel boke, thou art so unconning,
How darst thou put thyself in prees, for drede?
It is wonder that thou wexest not redel
Sith that thou wost ful lite who shal biholde
Thy rude langage, ful boistously unfolde.

The Boke of Cupide, God of Love,
or the Cuckow and the Nightingale.



GOD of Love, ah! benedicite,
How myghty and how grete a lorde is he!
for he can make of lowe hertes hye,
And highe hertes low, and like for to dye,
And harde hertis he can make free.

And he can make, within a lytel stounde,
Of seke folke, ful fresh, hool and sounde,
And of hool folke he can make seke;
He can bynde, and wel unbynden eke,
What he wole have bounden or unbounde.

To telle his myght my wit may not suffyse,
for he can make of wise folke ful nyse,
for he may do al that he can devyse,
And in lithere folke dystroye vise,
And proude hertys he can make agryse.

Shortely, al that evere he wol he may,
Ayenst him ther dar no wight seye nay;
for he can glade and greve whom him lyke,
And whom that he wol, don hym laughe or sike,
And most his myght he sheweth ever in May.

for every trewe gentil herte and fre,
That with him is, or thinketh for to be,
Ayens May now shal have some sterynge,
Other to joy, or elles to some morenyng,
In no sesoun so grette, as thynketh me.

for then they mowe here the briddes singe,
And see the floures and the leves springe,
That bringeth into hertes remembraunce
A maner ease, ymedled with grevaunce,
And lusty thoghtes ful of grete longyng.

And of that longyng cometh hevynesse,
And thereof groweth oft tyme grete seknesse,
And al for lak of that that they desyre:
And thus in May ben hertys set on fire,
And so they brenne forthe in grete distressse.

I speke al this of felyng truly;
for althogh I be olde and un lusty,
Yet have I felte of that sekenes in May
Bothe hote and colde, an acces every day,
How sore ywis, ther wot no wight but I.

I am so shaken with the feveres white,
Of al this May yet slept I but a lyte;
And also hit ne liketh noght to me
That eny herte shulde sleepy be,
In whom that Love his firy dart wol smyte.

But as I lay this other nyght wakynge,
I thought how lovers had a tokenynge,
And among hem hit was a comune tale,
That hit wer good to here the nyghtyngale,
Rather then the leude cukkow synge.

And then I thought anoon, as hit was daye,
I wolde goo somme whedir for to assaye
Yf that I myght a nyghtyngale here;
for yet I non had herd of al this yere,
And hit was tho the thridde nyght of May.

And right anoon as I the day espiede,
No lenger wolde I in my bed abyde;
But unto a wode that was faste by,
I wente forthe allone ful prively,
And helde my way doun by a broke syde,

Til I come into a launde of white and grene,
So feire oon had I nevere in bene;
The grounde was grene, ypoudred with daysé,
The floures and the gras ylike al hie,
Al grene and white, was no thing elles sene.

There sat I dounne amonge the feire floures,
And saw the briddes crepe out of her boures,
Ther as they had rested hem al the nyght;
They were so joyful of the dayes lyght,
That they beganne of Mayes ben ther houres.

They coude that servise alle by rote;
Ther was also mony a lovely note!
Somme songe loude as they hadde pleyned,
And somme in other maner voys yfeyned,
And somme al oute with a lowde throte.

They pruned hem, and made hem ryght gay,
And daunseden and lepten on the spray;
And evermore two and two in fere,
Ryght so as they hadde chosen hem to yere
In feverere upon Seynt Valentynes day.

And the ryver that then I sat upon,
Hit made suche a noyse as hit ther ron,
Hcordaunt to the foules ermonye,
Methoght hit was the beste melodye
That myghte be herd of eny lyvynge man.

And for delyte, I ne wote never how,
I fel in such a slombre and a swowe,
Nat al on slepe, ne fully al wakyng,
And in that swowe me thoght I herde singe
That sory bridde the lewede Cukkowe,

And that was on a tre right faste bye.
And who was then evel apayed but I?
Now God, quod I, that died upon the croise,
Vive sorowe on thee, and on thy foule voys!
for lytel joy have I now of thy crie.

And as I with the Cukkow gan to chide,
I herde, in the nexte busshes beside,
A Nyghtyngale so lustely to singe,
That with her clere voys she made ryng
Thro out alle the grene wode wide.

Al goode Nyghtyngale, quod I thenne,
Al lytelle hast thou be to longe henne,
for her hath be the lewede Cukkow,
And songen songes rather then hast thou:
I prey to God that evel fire him brenne!

And now I wil yow tel a wonder thynge:
As longe as I lay in that swownyng,
Me thought I wist al that the briddes mente,
And what they seyde, and what was her entente,
And of her speche I hadde good knowyng.

And then herd I the Nyghtyngale seye:
How, goode Cukkow, go sommewhere thy weye
And let us that can synge dwellen here;
for every wight escheweth thee to here,
Thy songes be so elyng, in gode feye.

What, quoth she, what may thee ayle now?
Hit thinketh me, I synge as wel as thou,
for my songe is bothe trewe and pleyne,
Althogh I cannot creke hit so in veyne,
As thou dost in thy throte, I wote ner how.

And every wight may understande me,
But, Nyghtyngale, so may they not don thee,
for thou hast mony a feyned quēint cry;
And I have herd thee seye, Ocy, ocy;
But who myghte wete what that shulde be?

O fole, quoth she, wostow not what that is?
Whan that I sey, Ocy, ocy, ywisse,
Then mene I that I wolde wonder fayne,
That al tho were shamefully yslayne,
That menen ought ayenes love amys.

And also I wolde alle tho were dede,
That thenke not her lyve in love to lede,
for who that wol the God of Love not serve,
I dar wel sey he is worthy for to sterve;
And for that skille, Ocy, ocy, I grede.

Ey l quoth the Cukkow, ywis this is queynt lawe,
That eyther shal I love or elles be slawe
But I forsake alle suche compayne;
for myn entent is neyther for to dye,
Ne while I lyve in Loves yoke to drawe.

for lovers be the folke that ben on lyve,
That moste disese han, and most unthrive,
And most enduren sorowe, wo, and care,
And at the lest failen of her welfare:
What nedith hit ayenes treweth to strive?

What? quoth she tho; thou art out of thy myndel
How maist thou in thy cherles herte fynde
To speke of Loves servautes in this wyse?
for in this worlde is noon so good servyse
To every wyght that gentil is of kynde;

for therof truly cometh al goodnesse,
Al honour and al gentilnesse,
Worshippe, and ese, and alle hertys lust,
Perfyt joy, and ful ensured trust,
Jolite, plesaunce, and eek freshenesse,

Lowelyhed, and trewe compayne,
Semelyhed, largenesse, and curtesye,
Drede of shame, and for to don amys:
for he that truly Loves servaunt ys,
Were lother be yshamed then to dye.

And that is sothe al that ever I sey,
In that beleve I wil bothe lyve and deye,
And, Cukkow, so rede I thee that thou do ywis.
Ye then, quoth she, God let me never have blis,
If evere I unto that counseyl obeye!

Nyghtyngale, thou spekest wonder feyre,
But, for al that, the sothe is the contreyre;
for loving in yonge folke is but rage,
And in olde folk hit is a grete dotage,
Who most hit useth, most he shal apeyre.

for therof cometh mony an hevinesse,
Sorow and care, and mony a grete seknesse,
Dispite, debate, angre, and envye,
Repreve and shame, untrust, and jelosye,
Pride, and myschefe, povert, and wodenesse.

What! Lovyng is an office of dispaire,
And oon thing is therin that is not faire;
for who that geteth of love a lytil blysse,
But if he be alway therby ywysse,
He may ful sone of age have his haire.

And, therfor, Nyghtyngale, holde thee nye;
for, leve me wel, for al thy loude crye,
If thou fer or longe be fro thy make,
Thou shalt be as other that be forsake,
Then shalt thou haten love as wele as I.

Fye, quoth she, on thy name and on thee!
The God of Love ne let thee nevere ythe!
for thou art wors a thousand folde then wode,
for mony is ful worthie and ful gode,
That hadde be noght, ne hadde love ybe.

For Love his servant evermore amendeth,
And fro al evele tachches him defendeth,
And maketh him to brenne as eny fire,
In trouthe and in worschippeful desire,
And, whom him liketh, joy ynogh him sendeth.

Nye, Nyghtyngale, he seyde, holde thee now stille!
for Love hath no resoun but his wille;
for ofte sithe untrewe folke he esith,
And trewe folk so bittirly displeseth,
That for defaute of grace he let hem spille.

With suche a lorde wolde I never be,
for he is blynde alwey and may not se,
And whan he lyeth he not, ne whan he fayleth.
And in his court ful selde trouthe avayleth,
So dyverse and so wilful eke is he.

Than toke I of the Nyghtyngale kepe;
She kest a sighe out of her herte depe,
And seyde: Alas, that I ever was bore!
I can for tene seye not oon worde more;
And ryght with that she brast on for to wepe.

Alas! quoth she, my herte wol tobreke
To here thus this false bridd speke
Of Love, and of his worshipful servyse.
Now God of Love, thou helpe me in summe wyse,
That I may on this Cukkow ben awreke.

Methought than, that I stert up anone,
And to the broke I ran and gatte a stone,
And at the Cukkow hertely I caste;
And he for drede gan flye awey ful faste,
And glad was I, whan that he was ygon.

And evermore the Cukkow, as he fley,
He seyde: farewell, farewell papyngay!
As thogh he had yscorned, as thoght me;
But ay I hunted him fro tre to tre,
Tille he was fer al out of syght away.

And then come the Nyghtyngale to me,
And seyde: frende, forsoth I thanke thee,
That thou hast lyked me thus to rescowe;
And oon avowe to love I wol allowe,
That al this May I wol thy singer be.

I thanked her, and was ryght wel apayed:
Yee, quoth she, and be thou not amayed,
Thogh thou have herde the Cukkow er then me;
for, if I lyve, hit shal amended be
The nexte May, yf I be not affrayed.

And oon thing I wol rede thee also,
Ne leve thou not the Cukkow, loves fo,
for al that he hath seyde is strong lesinge.
Nay, nay, quoth I, ther shal no thing me bringe
fro love, and yet he doth memekil wo.

Yee? Use thou, quoth she, this medecyne,
Everich day this May er that thou dyne:
Goo loke upon the fresshe flour the dayesye,
And, thogh thou be for wo in poynt to dye,
That shal ful gretly lyssen thee of thy pyne.

And loke alwey that thou be gode and trewe,
And I wol synge oon of my songes newe
for love of thee, as loude as I may crye.
¶ And thenne she began this songe ful hye:
I shrewe hem al that be to love untrewe.

¶ And whan she hadde songen hit out to thende,
Now farewel, quoth she, for I moste wende,
And, God of Love, that can ryght wel and may,
As mekil joye sende yow this day,
As ever yet he eny lover sendel

¶ Thus toke the Nyghtyngale hir leve of me.
I pray to God he alway with hir be,
And joy of love he sende hir evermore,
And shilde us fro the Cukkow and his lore,
for ther is non so fals a bridd as he.

forthe she fley, the gentil Nyghtyngale,
To alle the briddes that werene in the dale,
And gat hem alle into a place in fere,
And hem besoughten that they wolden here
Hir dysese, and thus began hir tale.

Ye knowe wel, hit is not fro yow hidde,
How that the Cukkow and I fast have chidde
Ever sithe that hit was dayes lyght;
I prey yow alle that ye do me ryght
Of that foule, fals, unkynde bridde.

Then spake oon brid for al, by oon assent:
This mater asketh good avysement;
for we be fewe briddes her in fere,
And soth hit is, the Cukkow is not here,
And therfore we wol have a parlement.

And therat shal the egle be our lorde,
And other perys that ben of recorde,
And the Cukkow shal be after ysent;
And ther shal be yeven the jugement,
Or elles we shul make summe acorde.

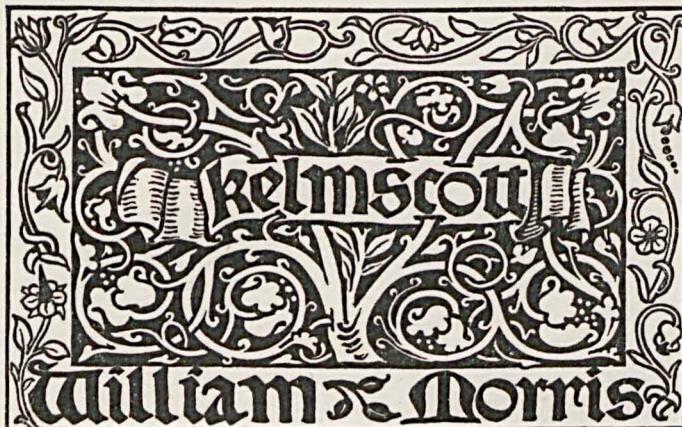
And this shal be, withouten any nay,
The morowe, Seynt Valentynes day,
Undir the maple that is feire and grene,
Before the chambre window of the Quene,
At Modestok upon the grene lay.

¶ She thanked hem, and than hir leve she toke,
And fleye into an hawthorne by the broke,
And ther she sate and songe upon the tre,
Terme of my lyve love hath withholde me,
So loude that I with that song awoke.

Explicit Clanvowe.

Note. It has been pointed out by the Rev. Professor Skeat, in "The Academy," May 2, 1896, p. 365, that the words "Explicit Clanvowe" which occur in the MS., ff. 1, 6 (Camb. Univ. Lib.), clearly refer to the author of the poem, Sir Thomas Clanvowe. He has further shown that the date is about 1405-10, and that "the queen" is Joan of Navarre, who held Woodstock manor.

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